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THE UNITED STATES PARK POLICE

A HISTORY

by

Barry Mackintosh

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Barry Mackintosh

History Division
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

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The United States Park Police is a unique organization within the National Park Service. It is the oldest NPS component, predating its adoptive parent by half a century (or more, some would argue). Its personnel wear distinctive uniforms, perform specialized functions, and are regularly assigned to a small minority of national parklands.

Most NPS employees are probably unfamiliar with the Park Police and may well wonder why the organization exists. From the demanding nature of their duties and the evident public service they perform, Park Police personnel surely know why the organization exists; but few of them may know how it began and how far it has come to reach its present elite status. This short history is intended to acquaint NPS employees in general and Park Police personnel in particular with its background and evolution. If it helps them and others interested in the force to better understand and appreciate this special NPS unit, it will have served its purpose.

ORIGINS

The United States Park Police has a long history. Just how long is a matter of interpretation. Although the present organization dates from after the Civil War, its functional lineage may be traced nearly to the beginnings of the national capital in the 1790s.

In 1791 Pierre Charles L'Enfant completed his plan for Washington, and three commissioners appointed by President George Washington to bring the federal city into existence began to purchase the land needed for its public buildings and grounds. As construction proceeded on the Capitol and White House during that decade, the commissioners may have hired watchmen to guard those building sites. Surely they employed watchmen for security at the completed buildings and their grounds after the government moved from Philadelphia to Washington in 1800. Inasmuch as the commissioners' office was the direct ancestor of the National Park Service with respect to its national capital parks functions, these watchmen may be considered the functional ancestors of today's park police.

The new capital city was initially policed by a constable appointed by Prince George's County, Maryland, having been laid out on land previously within that jurisdiction. An 1802 act of Congress to incorporate a city government gave the city corporation authority "to establish night-watches, or patroles," and the next year the city council created the position of police superintendent, replacing the Prince George's County constable.[1] This may be considered the beginning of today's Metroplitan Police Depart-

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[1]Kenneth G. Alfers, "The Washington Police: A History, 1800-1866," Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1975, pp. 16-17.

ment (which achieved that title in 1861 when Congress unified the separate forces for Washington City, Georgetown, and Washington County in a single Metropolitan Police District).[2]

From 1802 to 1867 Washington's federal buildings and grounds were under a Superintendent and then a Commissioner of Public Buildings, who reported to the Secretary of the Interior after the Interior Department was established in 1849. Initially the city's police regulations did not cover federal property, so offenders there could be prosecuted only "by the slow process of a writ of trespass." That difficulty was overcome in 1834 when Congress provided "that the regulations of the city of Washington for the preservation of the public peace and order, be extended to all the public buildings and public grounds belonging to the United States within the city of Washington whenever the application of the same shall be requested by the commissioner of the public buildings." The request was promptly made, and persons injuring or destroying federal property, driving carts and wagons on footways, and other such offenses could now be readily punished.[3] Presumably the city police were expected to apprehend most violators, for although records of the period specify appropriations for watchmen at certain public buildings, including the White House and Capitol, they contain no reference to watchmen in the parks or grounds.

An 1850 appropriations act funded "two watchmen to be employed in preserving the public grounds about the Capitol," and successive appropriations through the 1850s provided for watchmen at the Capitol and White

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[2] U.S. Statutes at Large 12: 320-26.

[3] An Act Making Appropriations for the Public Buildings and Grounds, June 30, 1834, U.S. Statutes at Large 4: 723; Report of the Commissioner of Public Buildings, Dec. 23, 1834, House Doc. 35, 23d Congress, p. 3.

House grounds and laborers on the public grounds and in the President's garden.[4] The Commissioner of Public Buildings had two day watchmen in the Capitol Square, two night watchmen at the White House, and a night watchman at the public stables on his rolls in the mid-1850s.[5]

The first official reference to watchmen elsewhere on the public grounds appears in 1866. In that first year after the Civil War B. B. French, the Commissioner of Public Buildings, responded to a congressional resolution that he identify his employees and attest that none were Confederates or Confederate sympathizers. His list contained 30 Capitol police, 5 Capitol watchmen, 2 watchmen at the White House, and 2 watchmen in Reservation 2, the Smithsonian Grounds. The last two, in the area now better known as the Mall and Washington Monument grounds, were also listed as "laborers."[6] Two successive appropriations acts that year provided for three more watchmen at the Smithsonian Grounds and one at Franklin Square.[7]

Soon afterward the watchmen came under military control. An act of Congress approved March 2, 1867, abolished the position of Commissioner of Public Buildings and assigned its duties to the Chief Engineer of the Army. The Chief Engineer, a general officer, would discharge this responsibility through an office titled Public Buildings and Grounds, headed by a field grade officer (normally a colonel). As if to reinforce the military connection, Congress decreed that "hereafter no person shall be appointed as

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[4]Deficiency Act of May 15, 1850, U.S. Statutes at Large 9: 427; Appropriations Act of Apr. 3, 1851, ibid., p. 613.

[5]"Report of the Commissioner of Public Buildings," in Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1857 (Washington, 1857), p. 728.

[6]House Exec. Doc. 109, 39th Congress, May 16, 1866.

[7]Appropriations Act of July 28, 1866, U.S. Statutes at Large 14: 315; Deficiency Act of Dec. 20, 1866, ibid., p. 374.

policeman or watchman who has not served in the army or navy of the United States, and received an honorable discharge." The appropriations act containing this requirement and successive appropriations through 1870 continued to provide for five watchmen on the Smithsonian and Washington Monument grounds and one at Franklin Square.[8]

A half-century later, in 1916, the officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds traced his park police organization to the two park watchmen on the Washington Monument grounds when the Chief Engineer took over in 1867.[9] A published account of the force in 1931 repeated this understanding: "[I]n 1867 the forerunners of the present body of United States Park Police, consisting of two men appointed as watchmen for the Monument grounds, were appointed at a salary of $720 per annum. From that small beginning, the force has grown steadily with the park system of the Capital . . . ."[10]

As more of L'Enfant's squares and circles underwent park development in the postwar decades, more watchmen were needed to oversee them. The Chief of Engineers outlined their purpose in his 1879 annual report to the Secretary of War:

> The necessity for additional watchmen upon the park reservations is rendered more apparent from year to year as these spots become greater resorts for the people. . . . Each reservation containing either a piece of statuary, a lodge, a fountain, ornamental vases, and drinking fountains requires a watchman, not only to preserve the property from

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[8]Appropriations acts of Mar. 2, 1867, ibid., pp. 456-57, 466.

[9]Letter, Col. W. W. Harts to Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, June 16, 1916, Park Police file (No. 180), Public Buildings and Grounds correspondence 1907-1921, Record Group 42, National Archives, Washington, D.C. This record collection hereinafter cited as PB&G.

[10]Capt. R. C. Montgomery, USPP, "Guardians of Washington's Parks," Nation's Capital Magazine, April 1931, p. 8.

injury, but to make minor repairs of the walks and sodding, to keep the paths and lawns free of papers and shavings and other rubbish . . . , and also to preserve order among and protect those who may chance to visit the squares for their personal pleasure and comfort.[11]

Appropriations for fiscal year 1875 covered four watchmen on the Smithsonian Grounds, one at Franklin Square, one at Lafayette Square, one at Lincoln Square, one at Washington Circle, and one at the circle at Massachusetts and Vermont avenues (later Thomas Circle). Those at the Smithsonian Grounds and Franklin and Lafayette squares received annual salaries of $720, the others $540.[12] By 1880 the force had grown to 12, listed as follows by badge number:

1. Edward McCormick, Day Watchman, Smithsonian Grounds
2. Stephen Simonds, Watchman, Franklin Square
3. E. F. Austin, Watchman, Lafayette Square
4. John Dowell, Night Watchman, Smithsonian Grounds
5. Jacob Crison, Watchman, Lincoln Square
6. Robert Anderson, Night Watchman, Smithsonian Grounds
7. Samuel H. Chapman, Watchman, Judiciary Square
8. John F. Brown, Watchman, Iowa Circle (later Logan Circle) and Reservation at Massachusetts and Rhode Island avenues and 16th Street (later Scott Circle)
9. Edwin Knowles, Watchman, Rawlins, McPherson, and Farragut squares and Washington Circle
10. Godfrey Beck, Watchman, 14th Street Circle (later Thomas Circle) and Reservation on Massachusetts Avenue between 10th and 12th streets and Mount Vernon Place
11. Blucher Willis, Watchman, Stanton Place, Reservation on Maryland Avenue between 1st and 6th streets and Reservation on Delaware Avenue at 1st Street N.E.
12. Charles W. Jones, Day Watchman, Smithsonian Grounds[13]

The badges, together with batons and police whistles, were issued after Congress, in an appropriations act approved June 15, 1880, directed that "each of the watchmen herein provided for shall have the same duties

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[11]Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers to the Secretary of War for the Year 1879 (Washington, 1879), p. 1883.

[12]Appropriations Act of June 20, 1874, U.S. Statutes at Large 18: 89.

[13]List of park watchmen July 29, 1880, Letters Received, PB&G.

and powers of the Metropolitan police."[14] George H. Brown, who then oversaw the watchmen in his capacity as public gardener, dispensed these items and kept a whistle for himself. Maj. William G. Brock, superintendent of the Metropolitan Police, responded with a general order in support of the watchmen: "Their calls for assistance will be responded to as quickly as if the calls were given by a member of the regular force." Thomas P. Meagan, representing the D.C. Commissioners, promised Col. Thomas L. Casey, head of Public Buildings and Grounds and Brown's boss, that Major Brock would "confer with you fully in reference to your 'Park Police' and our connection with them."[15]

From that time on the watchmen were regularly known as "Park Police," even though the designation did not become official for nearly 40 years. Their new authority originally extended only during the fiscal year covered by the appropriations act granting it, but Congress renewed this authority for the next fiscal year and then made it permanent in an appropriations act for fiscal 1883, approved August 5, 1882: "hereafter all watchmen provided for by the United States Government for service in any of the public squares and reservations in the District of Columbia shall have and perform the same powers and duties of the Metropolitan police of said District" (emphasis added).[16]

There was some disagreement about whether this gave the watchmen police powers outside the parks. The D.C. Commissioners initially took the position that it did not. They offered to give the watchmen special

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[14]U.S. Statutes at Large 21: 229.

[15]General Order No. 459, July 2, 1880, and Meagan endorsement on copy of order to Casey, Letters Received, PB&G.

[16]U.S. Statutes at Large 22: 243.

appointments as "additional policemen" on the Metropolitan force so that they could act beyond park boundaries, but this was unsatisfactory to Public Buildings and Grounds officials. They did not want to allow the Commissioners an effective veto over the appointment of watchmen by making their full performance subject to the Commissioners' approval. The issue was referred to the Attorney General, who decided in July 1886 that the language of the law giving park watchmen "the same powers and duties of the Metropolitan police" could not mean that they had lesser jurisdiction.[17] The D.C. Commissioners accepted the opinion and conveyed it to their force. Henceforth the park watchmen carried the full authority of the Metropolitan Police without regard to location.

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[17]Letter, President W. B. Webb, Board of D.C. Commissoners, to Col. John M. Wilson, Officer in Charge, Public Buildings and Grounds, July 14, 1886, Letters Received, PB&G; letter, Attorney General A. H. Garland to Secretary of War William C. Endicott, July 30, 1886, ibid.; General Order No. 200, Aug. 10, 1886, ibid.

EARLY PERSONALITIES AND PROBLEMS

Notwithstanding their newly acquired police powers, the park watchmen of the 1880s were still occupied largely with other duties. The Chief of Engineers characterized their function in his 1886 annual report:

> They are not watchmen, in the common acceptation of that term, but are really park-keepers, doing daily the work of gardener, laborer, and watchman. During the season of active operations they are on duty daily, including Sundays, from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m., with only time for their meals. The parks under their charge are the handsomest in the city, and are visited by large numbers of citizens and strangers. The entire time of these watchmen is devoted to making their parks as beautiful as possible. . . .[1]

There were no set knowledge, education, or experience requirements beyond prior military service in these early years, and not surprisingly the watchmen varied in their capacity and fitness for the job. Samuel H. Chapman, the watchman at Judiciary Square, was an elderly veteran of the Seminole, Mexican, and Civil wars. During the last of these he had served as a captain in the 5th Iowa Infantry but "was compelled to resign and go home a broken down man," he wrote Sen. Samuel J. Kirkwood of Iowa in January 1880. He sought the senator's intercession to help him secure "an easier place" on account of his age and poor health, but Secretary of War Alexander Ramsey told Kirkwood that there was no easier place for Chapman in the park watch.[2]

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[1]Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1886 (Washington, 1886), pp. 2093-94.

[2]Letter, Chapman to Kirkwood, Jan. 5, 1880, Letters Received, Public Buildings and Grounds, Record Group 42, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; letter, Ramsey to Kirkwood, Jan. 9, 1880, ibid. This record collection hereinafter cited as PB&G.

Remaining at Judiciary Square, Chapman prompted public complaints for his inattention to duty. "Instead of sweeping off the pavement . . . he sits by the stove in his villa and reads his newspaper," wrote "a taxpayer" who regularly traversed the square. "A very estimable old gentleman no doubt, but wholly unsuited for the duty assigned him."[3] Another citizen's letter suggests that Chapman may have confused his assignment with that of another sort of watchman: "Mr. Chapman instead of attending to the duty of Watchman is employed at a table in the Watchman's House in Judiciary Square mending and repairing Clocks and Watches almost constantly during the business hours of the day, each and every day." Confronted with this complaint, Chapman confessed to some minor watch repairing on the job--for Public Buildings and Grounds officials at their request.[4] His resignation in April 1881 must have occasioned general relief.

Edwin Knowles, the watchman at Washington Circle and Rawlins, McPherson, and Farragut squares, was attacked anonymously by "A Laday [sic] who has known him for years" in July 1880: "He is a good talker and anyone who does not know him would think him a nice old man he is not he is a wicked old wretch . . . . I know a girl he ruined and he is always after colored girls he will make the Parks disrespectful unless watched himself."[5] While the case against Knowles lacked corroboration, the misconduct of Godfrey Beck and John F. Brown did not. Beck, the watchman in the reservations between Thomas Circle and Mount Vernon Square, was repeatedly drunk on duty

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[3]Letter, Thomas J. Hill to Col. Thomas L. Casey, Mar. 24, 1880, Letters Received, PB&G.

[4]Letter, John Watt to Col. Thomas L. Casey, Oct. 8, 1880, ibid.; letter, Chapman to George H. Brown, Oct. 18, 1880, ibid.

[5]Letter to Col. Thomas L. Casey, July 20, 1880, ibid.

and was finally discharged after being arrested by the Metropolitan Police for drunkenness in June 1883. Brown, the watchman at Logan and Scott circles, was the object of several complaints for over-officiousness before his denunciation in a joint letter from ten Metropolitan Police officers in July 1884: "Under his management disorderly characters are tolerated, and commit violations of the law without any interference on his part. His time, when he is there, is so much occupied by women, that he has no thought of his official duties. During the day when he is supposed to be there, his time is passed with a colored woman living on Kingman Place." He had previously been dismissed from the Metropolitan Police for neglect of duty, they said.[6] Brown stayed on the rolls but was transferred to the Smithsonian Grounds, away from the neighborhood of his alleged distraction.

Jacob Crison, the watchman at Lincoln Square, appears to have taken his responsibilities seriously, if his performance one day in 1879 is any indication. A citizen claiming influence with the House Appropriations Committee wrote Colonel Casey to complain about Crison's "impertinence and stupidity," adding, "I have observed that these guardians of the public squares, triangles, &c., &c., allow negros and 'poor white trash' to lie around and occupy the benches in indecent positions, oftentimes and to the exclusion of decent people while they reserve all the exertion of their brief authority against some modest gentleman who detests the notoriety of public attention under such circumstances." But according to Crison, the man had ridden unlawfully into the park on horseback, nearly trampled a gentleman and his child, and when asked to leave flaunted his Appropriations

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[6]Letter to Col. A. F. Rockwell, Officer in Charge, Public Buildings and Grounds, July 15, 1884, ibid.

Committee connection.[7] Crison had persisted in ejecting him and suffered no adverse consequences from his complaint.

Some complaints against watchmen emanated from their fellows. In 1887 Edward Cummerford, a night watchman on the Smithsonian Grounds, charged his colleague Thomas O'Brien with neglect of duty, frequently leaving his post, and removing flowers from trees and shrubbery. O'Brien denied the charges, saying they came "from one who is a combination of treachery and vindictiveness" and attributing his absences to court appearances in connection with arrests he had made. When O'Brien got in another dispute with another watchman soon afterward, Col. John M. Wilson, officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, became exasperated: "The U.S. does not employ watchmen to quarrel among themselves and annoy this office with complaints."[8]

Of course, it is impossible to measure the overall performance of the early watch force from the few such incidents in the surviving records. Serious problems were evidently uncommon, and the expansion of the force during the last decades of the century suggests that it was doing well overall. By 1900 the force, nearly twice its size in 1880, numbered 23 men:

James McKericher, Franklin Park
James Selbie, Lafayette Park
Charles Roskin, Smithsonian Grounds (day)
Joseph Field, Smithsonian Grounds (day)
James White, Judiciary Park
Alexander Robertson, Lincoln Park
Edward Dorsey, Iowa (Logan) Circle
Patrick Dowd, Thomas Circle
W. W. Steele, Washington Circle
David C. Kerr, Dupont Circle

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[7]Letter, Robert J. Stevens to Casey, July 28, 1879, ibid.; letter, Crison to George H. Brown, Aug. 9, 1879, ibid.

[8]Letter, George H. Brown to Wilson, July 7, 1887, ibid.; note, Wilson to Foreman John Brown, September 1887, ibid.

Jacob A. Chase, McPherson and Farragut parks
E. F. Austin, Stanton Park
Edward Donnelly, Henry and Seaton parks
L. F. Davis, Henry and Seaton parks
James B. Smith, Mount Vernon Park
Thomas Smith, grounds south of Executive Mansion
Thomas Goodall, greenhouses at nursery
Charles F. Held, Garfield Park
A. T. Carrico, Smithsonian Grounds (night)
Martin Kenny, Smithsonian Grounds (night)
Thomas F. O'Neill, Judiciary Park (night)
John Cherry, Henry and Seaton parks (night)
John F. Lacey, Garfield Park (night)[9]

Three of them, White, Robertson, and Steele, had recently been promoted from laborer positions, suggesting that the two jobs still had common elements.[10] The force remained inadequate for the task at hand, however, and the Chief of Engineers pleaded for more:

> The one day watchman now allowed for the "White Lot" or President's Park [Ellipse] is quite unable to cope with the "scorching" bicyclers, fast [horse] drivers, and trespassers on the grass and shrubbery, and patrol 63 acres of ground. At night this large area with thickets and shrubs is absolutely defenseless, as there is no night watchman. After dark no decent woman, or couple of them, dare go through these grounds, and it has on several occasions proved dangerous for men.[11]

Common offenses at the turn of the century included drunk and disorderly behavior, fast driving (of horses and bicycles, automobiles still being rare), riding bicycles on walks, vagrancy, and indecent exposure. Some arrests and punishments reflected a rather rudimentary concern for civil liberties. On April 26, 1899, Thomas F. O'Neill arrested Richard W. Smith in Judiciary Park on a "suspicious character" charge; Smith was sentenced to two months in the workhouse (presumably for something more substantial,

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[9]Letter, Col. Theodore A. Bingham to Park Watchmen, Mar. 29, 1900, ibid.

[10]Letter, George H. Brown to Col. Theodore A. Bingham, Sept. 20, 1999, ibid.

[11]Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1899 (Washington, 1899), p. 3846.

although the record reveals nothing further). On June 12, 1900, James B. Smith nabbed William J. McNamara for profanity in Seaton Park; McNamara got 30 days in the workhouse. On the night of October 2, 1900, John Cherry arrested C. Kimmer and Kate Kirley for fornication in Seaton Park; he was fined $20 and she was sentenced to 60 days in the workhouse.[12]

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[12]Record of Arrests by U.S. Park Watchmen, Apr. 26, 1899, to Dec. 31, 1907, Entry 219, PB&G.

UPGRADING THE FORCE

The year 1900 was notable for the watch force on at least two accounts. First, Congress responded to the Chief of Engineers by authorizing four more night watchman positions and a sergeant for the force.[1] The night jobs were filled with some difficulty: the higher pay of $720 per annum versus $660 for the day watchmen did not prevent several of the latter from declining invitations for them. The sergeant's post, paying $900, was taken by Thomas F. O'Neill, the night watchman at Judiciary Park. O'Neill, born in Dublin in 1847, had served with the 7th U.S. Cavalry and was in Maj. Marcus A. Reno's command at Little Big Horn on June 25, 1876. Leaving the Army in 1882, he moved to Washington and joined the park watch in 1890. His promotion to become its first ranking officer suggests that he performed well. Sergeant O'Neill remained on duty until his death on March 22, 1914. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.[2]

The other significant event of 1900 was the uniforming of the force. Col. Theodore A. Bingham, then officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, took a close personal interest in this matter. The previous October he had written his friend John B. Jackson, first secretary of the American Embassy in Berlin, to request a picture of a German forester's uniform and a sample of "real 'Tyrolean loden'" that could be copied for his park watchmen.[3] Jackson complied via diplomatic pouch. Bingham then

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[1]Appropriations Act of Apr. 17, 1900, U.S. Statutes at Large 31: 116.

[2]Historical file, U.S. Park Police Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

[3]Letter, Bingham to Jackson, Oct. 5, 1899, Letters Received, Public Buildings and Grounds, Record Group 42, National Archives, Washington,

negotiated with Saks and Company in Washington and the New York Clothing House in Baltimore, finally selecting the latter as best able to meet his exacting specifications for design, material, color, buttons, and badges. ("[A]lthough they are undoubtedly of Hebraic descent they have on the whole treated me very squarely," he wrote a Cleveland official seeking to uniform that city's park watchmen.)[4]

Modeled after the German foresters' dress, the uniform was dark green with a tan straw helmet for summer wear. The jacket was three-quarter length with a half-belt on the back panel and five brown buttons. Black braid stripes lined the outer seams of the trousers. Sergeant O'Neill's jacket also had black braid chevrons pointed down on the sleeves. The complete uniform, issued at midyear, cost each man $17.75 (with no allowance); the government furnished only the cap ornament, badge, and club.[5]

Unfortunately, Colonel Bingham's carefully selected loden green faded rapidly, causing his successor, Col. Thomas W. Symonds, to change the uniform after only three years. The 1903 model was dark blue with a gray felt helmet and brass buttons. The still-unofficial "park police" designation received further sanction at this time: "U.S. Park Police" appeared on the helmet badge, the buttons had "U.S." in the center encircled by "Park" above and "Police" below, and there were "U.S.P.P." collar ornaments.[6] The men

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D.C. This record collection hereinafter cited as PP&G.

[4]Letter to Jacob B. Perkins, June 20, 1900, ibid.

[5]Memorandum, Bingham to Park Watchmen, May 28, 1900, ibid; illustrated in Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1900 (Washington, 1900), p. 5244; Roger Phillips, "The Park Police: History and Authority," Police Association News, June 1976, p. 12.

[6]Memorandum, Symonds to Park Watchmen, July 11, 1903, Letters Received,

still had to purchase the uniforms and the revolvers they now carried at their own expense; the government did not provide or bear the cost of these items until 1912.

The annual reports of the Chief of Engineers during this period regularly urged more men, more pay, and higher status for the watch force. According to the 1902 report,

> The Washington park watchman is the poorest-paid man in the United States who has police duty to perform. He has practically the same duties as the Metropolitan police; the same intelligence and physical qualities are required of him; his moral character must be good; his discipline is much the same; he has as many arrests to make as the average policeman; he runs the same risks as to injury from vicious people as the man doing duty on the street; his duties are more exacting, as half of his duty hours are spent in cautioning people about violating the rules of the park and in looking after children. He has a uniform to buy once a year in order to look neat; yet the pay of these watchmen is only $60 per month.[7]

This compared to $75 per month for the lowest grade of Metropolitan policeman, rising to $90 after five or six years. The report recommended that all fines and forfeitures from cases brought by watchmen be paid into a separate retirement and disability fund for them rather than going into the Metropolitan Police fund that did not benefit them. That recommendation was not immediately adopted, but the watchmen were given "free medical attendance just like the regular police of the city" that year.[8]

The report noted that the watch force, then consisting of a sergeant and 29 men, were "drilled in simple movements once a week, and [were] occasionally reviewed by the officer in charge." Colonel Bingham told the Civil Service Commission that year that he wanted "exceptionally good men"

PB&G; Phillips, "The Park Police: History and Authority," p. 12.

[7]Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1902 (Washington, 1902), p. 2730.

[8]Ibid., p. 2728.

because of the small size of the force. They needed to be no more than 58 years old, no less than five feet six inches tall and 165 pounds in weight, in good physical condition, and capable of writing legibly to make out reports. Long military service, preferably as a noncommissioned officer, was desirable "for discipline, punctuality, and cleanliness."[9]

The Chief of Engineers' report for 1903 described the force as still undermanned. Many parks had only one watchman patrolling for only eight hours. As a result, "During the off hours park loafers [took] advantage of the absence of the watchmen to do about as they please and subject respectable people to annoyance." The force needed to be enlarged further and to have its official designation changed to reflect its true nature:

> The designation of watchman does not describe the members of the force and their duties. They are strictly policemen, with all the powers of the regular police force, and their duty is to maintain proper police control over the parks. This requires a great deal of delicacy on the one hand in dealing with women and children and on the other the roughest and most dangerous kind of police work in dealing with toughs and offenders of all kinds. The duty of the men is not simply to watch the parks, but is also to protect the respectable people, especially women and children, in their full enjoyment, and unmolested by bad men and dissolute women. It would be a satisfaction to the men of the force and aid them in the performance of their duties to be designated as policemen, for offenders are sometimes averse to being cautioned by watchmen, and question the authority of a watchman to make an arrest. . . . It is therefore recommended that instead of watchmen this force be henceforth called park policemen in all appropriation bills and reports.[10]

The 1907 report repeated the call for redesignation, requested more money for the bicycles then in use by the men, and asked for a second sergeant at $1,050 per annum:

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[9]Ibid.; letter, Bingham to John R. Proctor, May 3, 1902, USPP historical file.

[10]Report of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1903 (Washington, 1903), pp. 2534-35.

> The one sergeant now in charge is overworked. During the day he has to ride his bicycle over the whole city, inspecting every park policeman, and also inspecting the outlying reservations not looked after by the park policemen. He has to come to this office every morning to make his report and receive instructions; he has to spend several hours a day at the police court several times a week, and in addition he has to inspect the night policemen in the parks three times a week.[11]

Through 1908, Congress continued to specify the park duty stations of watchmen in its appropriations acts. In that year the Chief of Engineers asked for an end to the practice.[12] Congress complied, enabling flexibility in assigning men where they were most needed.

"The general conduct of the men was good, and but few of them were reported for infractions of the regulations," the Chief of Engineers reported in 1912. "The watchmen enforced the police and park regulations in the parks, public travel on the park roads was regulated by them, fast driving kept down, the lawns, shrubbery, trees, and flower beds were protected from injury, women and children were protected from annoyances, known vagrants and loafers were kept out of the parks, all persons under the influence of liquor were ejected, and rowdyism and disorder were prevented."[13] When a watchman did go wrong, he could be punished by a loss of annual leave.[14]

The emphasis on hiring military veterans up to the age of 58 meant that youthful vigor was still not characteristic of the force. In 1914 a bill backed by Public Buildings and Grounds was introduced in Congress to replace the 28 Metropolitan policemen then detailed to the White House with

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[11] Report of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1907 (Washington, 1907).

[12] Report of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1908 (Washington, 1908), p. 2389.

[13] Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers, 1912 (Washington, 1912), p. 3498.

[14] Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers, 1913 (Washington, 1913), p. 3222.

park policemen. Joseph P. Tumulty, secretary to President Woodrow Wilson, protested to Col. William W. Harts, in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds: "As a rule the park policemen assigned to duty in the Federal parks throughout the District are too old for duty at the White House, where none but alert, robust, and active men should serve in such a capacity." Harts defended the proposed extension of his office's responsibility: "I am confident that there need be no trouble about the selection of alert, intelligent and physically well qualified men for these positions should I be required to undertake this duty. Such men . . . would not necessarily be selected from the present park police force." Unpersuaded and not wishing to have to train new men for White House duty, Tumulty conveyed his opposition to the Secretary of War, whose office thereupon recommended against the bill, insuring its demise.[15]

The park watchmen did assume some additional responsibilities in 1915 when they were posted at the Easter egg rolling festivities on the White House grounds and the annual review of the High School Cadets--events previously covered by the Metropolitan Police. That year, too, the Chief of Engineers first sought to bring the force into the motor age:

> Although the bicycle is an excellent mount for patrolling most of the parks and reservations, it is not sufficiently speedy for handling the traffic on the speedway [later Ohio Drive] and in Potomac Park. Here several thousand automobiles and motorcycles have to be handled daily. . . . At night it is not uncommon for automobiles to go through these parks at a great rate of speed, turning out their tail lights so that their numbers are indistinguishable and thus escaping, in many cases, from the watchmen.

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[15]H.R. 14742, 63d Congress; letter, Tumulty to Harts, Apr. 6, 1914, Park Police file (No. 180), PB&G; letter, Harts to Tumulty, Apr. 8, 1914, ibid.; letter, Tumulty to Secretary of War Lindley M. Garrison, June 23, 1914, ibid.; letter, Assistant Secretary of War Henry Breckinridge to Rep. James Hay, July 17, 1914, ibid.

To handle the problem, he requested appropriations for a motorcycle.[16]

By 1917, two years later, the force had two motorcycles--one assigned to the first sergeant, the other to a private. The first sergeant, another sergeant, and 43 privates (two of whom were acting sergeants without additional pay) made up its strength. Forty-one of the privates were equipped with bicycles. The force was now under the direct supervision of an Army officer detailed as an assistant to the officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds. The Chief of Engineers portrayed the force as an elite unit:

> The standard of the personnel is very high, a strong physique, excellent character, a high degree of personal responsibility, and absolute efficiency being the prime requisites. Military discipline is maintained as far as it is applicable to a force of men not actually in the military or naval service, and no untidiness in appearance or laxity in the performance of duty is tolerated. This high standard is maintained through careful selection of men applying for original appointment and by a system of constant and rigorous inspection.[17]

During the fiscal year ending in June 1917, the force handled 717 offenses. The most common charge (315) was drunkenness, for which the most common punishment (99) was the workhouse. There were few serious offenses, the worst being six cases of assault and one of robbery. Other cases included five instances of insanity (the subjects were sent to St. Elizabeth's), five charges of fornication (resulting in three fines and two workhouse sentences), and 15 collisions.[18]

The women's suffrage movement became increasingly vocal during this period, involving the park policemen on at least one occasion in 1918.

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[16]Report of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1915 (Washington, 1915), p. 3720.

[17]Report of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1917 (Washington, 1917), p. 3710.

[18]Ibid., p. 3711.

Twenty-five of the force were called upon to arrest about 50 women for climbing on the Lafayette statue in Lafayette Park and for holding a meeting there in violation of Section 4, Article VII of Rules and Regulations of the U.S. Parks and Reservations, which prohibited "the holding of any meeting" except religious meetings for which the Chief of Engineers had granted permission. According to their supervising Army officer, "The members of the Park Police conducted themselves with restraint and courtesy towards these women known as Suffragists."[19]

In 1919 the force acquired a major new responsibility and finally achieved its long-sought official designation. The new responsibility came that September when the administration of Rock Creek Park was transferred from its own board of control to Public Buildings and Grounds. The Metropolitan Police had patrolled Rock Creek Park, by far the largest park in Washington, since 1894; henceforth the park police would have this duty. Soon afterward, by an act of Congress approved December 5, 1919, the force was legally titled "United States Park Police."[20]

The enhanced status and responsibility were accompanied by greater strength and equipment. As of mid-1921 the force had a lieutenant, three sergeants, and 53 privates. Two of the sergeants and seven privates rode motorcycles, the lieutenant, the third sergeant, and 45 privates had bicycles; and the remaining private was horse-mounted.[21] With the addition

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[19]Memorandum, Maj. H. C. McLean to Col. Clarence S. Ridley, Aug. 22, 1918, Lafayette Park file (No. 173), PB&G.

[20]Barry Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History (Washington, 1985), pp. 19-20; Report of Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1920 (Washington, 1920), p. 4130; U.S. Statutes at Large 41: 364.

[21]Report of Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1921 (Washington, 1921), p. 2066.

of Rock Creek Park and the increased motorcycle capability, Park Police arrests soared from the 717 reported in fiscal year 1917 to 1,829 in fiscal 1920.

The composition of offenses changed dramatically in those three years. There were only half as many arrests for drunkenness (154) but 16 times as many for fornication (81). (No doubt this shift reflected a change of police emphasis to combat what was becoming a more flagrant situation in the "roaring 20s" rather than a decline in public intoxication.) By far the most arrests were now for "violation of traffic regulations" (439) and "violation of police regulations" (458) as the roads and traffic under Park Police jurisdiction increased and as miscellaneous offenses were lumped together in record-keeping.[22]

Of course, members of the force sometimes failed to meet the high standards expected of them and had to be punished for various infractions. The record of disciplinary actions during 1921-1922 is illustrative. Pvt. M. W. Carlson forfeited one day of annual leave "for sitting on a Bench in the Park while on Duty and in full Uniform." Pvt. William D. Hennessy got the same punishment "for engaging in an unofficial conversation with a citizen for a period of (25) minutes." Pvt. Thomas Bell was suspended for a day "for being in a Government Building for 30 minutes without authority." Pvt. Jeffrey Connell drew a two-day suspension "for engaging in an altercation with another man while in Uniform to the Disgrace of the U.S. Park Police"; soon afterward he was temporarily reduced to the grade of U.S. Watchman (a guard position) "for general inefficiency." Sgt. Carroll T. Gillespie suffered the greatest loss, being reduced to private "for signing

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[22]Report of Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1920 (Washington, 1920), p. 4129.

[a] petition and general unsatisfactory work."[23]

Notwithstanding its increased strength, the force was still insufficient to meet the demands upon it, particularly those posed by Rock Creek Park. Lt. Col. Clarence O. Sherrill, who took charge of Public Buildings and Grounds in 1921, remarked on the problem before the House Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds a year later:

> [W]e have only three men in Rock Creek Park. The mothers' association and other people are constantly complaining to me because we have not enough police supervision in that immense area to keep young girls from being abused and maltreated. . . . There are times in the week when we can not have any man at all in the park from midnight until daylight, and only the other day a lady called me and said that she had been down there and had seen some perfectly disgraceful things in there about half past 12 o'clock one night. . . . [W]e have arranged to allow no parking out there after midnight . . . to keep men from abusing the privileges of the park because of the lack of adequate police protection.[24]

Legislation enacted May 27, 1924, specified the organization and entitlements of the force at that time and its salaries as of July 1:

> [T]he United States park police shall be under the exclusive charge and control of the officer in charge of public buildings and grounds, under the general direction of the Chief of Engineers, United States Army. It shall consist of an active officer of the United States Army, detailed by the War Department, one lieutenant with grade corresponding to that of lieutenant (Metropolitan police), one first sergeant, five sergeants with grade corresponding to that of sergeant (Metropolitan police), and fifty-four privates, all of whom shall have served three years to be with grade corresponding to private, class 3 (Metropolitan police); all of whom shall have served one year to be with grade corresponding to private, class 2 (Metropolitan police); and all of whom shall have served less than one year to be with grade corresponding to private, class 1 (Metropolitan police).
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> [T]he annual salaries of the members of the United States park police force shall be as follows: Lieutenant, $2,700; first sergeant, $2,400; sergeants, $2,300 each; privates, class 3, $2,000 each; privates, class 2, $1,800 each; privates, class 1, $1,700 each.
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> [T]he members of the United States park police force shall be furnished with uniforms, means of transportation, and such other

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[23]Reports on Sick and Injured Record Book (Entry 220), PB&G.

[24]Hearing on S. 3659, June 22, 1922, House Public Buildings and Grounds Committee Print No. 25, 67th Congress, p. 4.

> equipment as may be necessary for the proper performance of their duties, including badges, revolvers, and ammunition; the United States Army officer detailed as superintendent of the United States park police, who shall use on official business motor transportation furnished and maintained by himself, shall receive an extra compensation of not to exceed $480 per annum. Members detailed to motor-cycle service shall each receive an extra compensation of $120 per annum.[25]

The sergeants' and privates' pay was $100 less than that of their Metropolitan Police counterparts, but the latter had to pay for their uniforms. Colonel Sherrill thought the clothing allowance for his men "a very advantageous arrangement, because in that way I am able to see that they are neatly uniformed. If you will see the park policemen with their long stockings and knickerbockers, mounted on motorcycles, you will agree that they are a very likely lot of men."[26]

In February 1925, Congress abolished the Public Buildings and Grounds office under the Army's Chief of Engineers and assigned its responsibilities to a new Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, an independent agency reporting directly to the President.[27] Colonel Sherrill became director of the successor agency and carried on with the same staff, so the reorganization had little practical effect on the parks and their police force. Upon Sherrill's retirement that December, Maj. Ulysses S. Grant III, grandson of the Civil War general and 18th President, took his place and held it nearly to the end of the agency's existence in 1933.

Major Grant's annual report for 1926 revealed further growth in the U.S. Park Police to 61 privates. The lieutenant was furnished with a "two passenger vehicle," 20 of the men had motorcycles, and the rest got about

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[25]U.S. Statutes at Large 43: 175.

[26]Hearing on S. 3659, p. 4.

[27]Act of Feb. 26, 1925, U.S. Statutes at Large 43: 983.

on bicycles.[28] Perhaps the lieutenant's vehicle was a motorcycle with sidecar, for the Park Police acquired their first automobile in 1929 according to Grant's testimony before the House Appropriations Committee in 1932. By the latter date the force had six cars, all Fords: three runabouts, two sedans, and a touring car.[29]

In 1931 Grant reported that the force had expanded its modus operandi in another direction:

> In order to cope with thieving from parked automobiles, stealing of golf balls on public courses, indecent exposure, and other offenses usually covertly committed when police are thought to be elsewhere, it was found necessary to have plain-clothes men detailed to localities where such offenses have been reported. The number of complaints received of annoyance to persons visiting the parks, particularly women and girls, was considerably reduced by the operations of these plain-clothes men.[30]

When parks were still relatively safe at night and air conditioning was unknown, Washington's downtown residents sometimes slept in the parks during heat waves. The vagrancy laws prohibited such activity, but they were not enforced at such times against "respectable" citizens. On the night of July 26, 1931, for example, more than 200 people from nearby rooming houses slept in Judiciary Square. Lest the privilege be abused, the Park Police awoke them between 7:00 and 7:30, ostensibly as a service. Patrick J. Carroll, the acting chief, told the Evening Star: "The park police realize that most of the people sleeping in the parks are employed

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[28] Annual Report of the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, 1926 (Washington, 1926), p. 33.

[29] District of Columbia Appropriation Bill for 1933, Hearings before the Subcommittee of House Committee on Appropriations in Charge of District of Columbia Appropriation Bill for 1933, 72d Congress, 1st Session (Washington, 1932), p. 1020.

[30] Annual Report of the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, 1931 (Washington, 1931), p. 61.

and are there to escape the heat. The park police are doing everything possible to see that these people are well taken care of. We don't want them to be late for work, so the men awaken them in time for breakfast."[31]

The following year the Park Police received their greatest additional responsibility since Rock Creek Park and their first outside Washington. When the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway on the Virginia shore of the Potomac opened early in 1932 for the bicentennial of George Washington's birth, 12 Park Police officers were assigned to patrol it.[32] This route from Arlington Memorial Bridge down to Mount Vernon was the first development of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, whose landscaped roadways would ultimately extend upriver to the Capital Beltway in Virginia and from Chain Bridge nearly to Great Falls in Maryland. As will be seen, the assumption of this and subsequent duties beyond the District of Columbia would help the Park Police fend off later threats to their independence.

On June 10, 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order abolishing the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital and assigning its functions to the National Park Service effective August 10. The same order gave the NPS the historic battlefields and fortifications then managed as national parks and monuments by the War Department and the national monuments within national forests under the Department of Agriculture.[33]

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[31]"Park Police Give Added Service to Those Sleeping Outdoors," Evening Star, July 27, 1931, Washingtoniana clipping collection, Martin Luther King Library, Washington, D.C.

[32]Annual Report of the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, 1932 (Washington, 1932), p. 29.

[33]Executive Order 6166, U.S. Code 5, secs. 124-32. The order briefly retitled the National Park Service the Office of National Parks, Buildings, and Reservations; the original name was restored early in 1934.

The National Park Service, a bureau of the Department of the Interior, had been created by Congress in 1916 to manage the national parks and monuments then under Interior and "such other national parks and reservations of like character as may be hereafter created by Congress."[34] The 1933 executive order was the culmination of a long campaign by its aggressive leadership to expand its scope beyond the western parks and monuments that constituted its primary responsibilities to that time. With the prominent memorials and parklands of the nation's capital in its custody, the NPS was assured of high visibility and enhanced public and political support.

Washington's parks (previously under Interior from 1849 to 1867) and the U.S. Park Police were now assigned to an NPS office with the administrative designation of National Capital Parks. But the reorganization had no immediate, dramatic effects on them. The police chief at the time, Capt. Patrick J. Carroll, and his men remained on duty, as did most of the civilian staff from the former Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital.[35] There was some infusion of personnel from elsewhere in the NPS: C. Marshall Finnan came from the superintendency of Mesa Verde National Park to superintend National Capital Parks, and other wearers of the NPS green followed. Because the NPS had no other police force, there was no movement of policemen as a result of the reorganization. The U.S. Park Police would not experience significant consequences from its inclusion in the National Park Service until the 1960s and 1970s, when men from outside the force were brought in to head it and when some of its men were assigned elsewhere in the national park system.

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[34]Public Law 235, 64th Congress, U.S. Statutes at Large 39: 535.

[35]The responsibility for public buildings acquired from this office in the 1933 reorganization remained with the NPS until 1939.

DEFENDING THE FORCE

With the Metropolitan Police patrolling all of Washington and empowered to handle law enforcement in the parks, why have a separate police force just for the parks? Versions of this question have been asked repeatedly during this century, requiring the United States Park Police and its overseers to defend its existence on a regular basis. While the defense has usually been couched in terms of the need for a specialized force, the element of "turf" is usually discernable between the lines if not cited explicitly. By and large, those responsible for the parks of the nation's capital have not wanted their policing subject to those responsible for the rest of the city.

The existence of the Park Police was questioned at least as early as 1916, when Secretary of War Newton D. Baker asked Col. William W. Harts, the officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, why it would not be advisable to merge the force (then under his department) with the Metropolitan Police. "So long as the administration of the public parks remains under Federal control, it is believed it would be most undesirable to place the police control of such areas under the jurisdiction of the local government," Harts replied. "This would invariably lead to conflict of authority . . . ." He went on to argue that the Metropolitan Police were more concerned with major crime than with park protection and would foist superannuated policemen unfit for street duty on the parks if given responsibility for them.[1]

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[1]Letter, Harts to Baker, June 16, 1916, Park Police file (No. 180), Public Buildings and Grounds correspondence 1907-1921, Record Group 42,

Some congressmen overseeing District affairs wondered about possible duplication of effort and excessive overhead in the maintenance of two police forces. Rep. Thomas L. Blanton of Texas, a member of the House Committee on the District of Columbia in the late 1920s, was among them. But Lt. Col. Ulysses S. Grant III, director of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, allayed his concerns. "Colonel Grant has convinced me that the time has not yet arrived to take away our park police force," Blanton said in 1928. "I have been convinced by him that there is a real necessity here for a Government police force, separate and distinct from the control of the District Commissioners . . . ."[2]

In the first years of the Depression, efforts were made to pare down federal activities to achieve greater economy in government. Washington's Evening Star newspaper reported in September 1932 "a revival of the much-discussed program of merging the United States Park Police, that are now under the director of public buildings and public parks, with the Metropolitan force."[3] D.C. Commissioner Melvin C. Hazen pressed this plan a year later, but the new civilian chiefs of Washington's parks and park police proved just as resistant to the idea as their former military managers had been. National Park Service Director Arno B. Cammerer stressed the fundamentally different responsibilities of the two forces, and National Capital Parks Superintendent C. Marshall Finnan announced a program to

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National Archives, Washington, D.C. This record collection hereinafter cited as PB&G.

[2]Work of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission; Statements of Lieut. Col. U.S. Grant, 3d, Maj. Carey H. Brown, and Charles W. Eliot, 2d, before the Committee on the District of Columbia, House of Representatives, March 10, 1928 (Washington, 1928), p. 9.

[3]Clipping from Evening Star, Sept. 22, 1932, in Park Police Reports and Correspondence 1930-1933, PB&G.

heighten their differences: the Park Police would be given mimeographed information on Washington's points of interest and taught how to become more helpful to visitors. The not-so-hidden agenda here was to make them irreplaceable by Metropolitan Police officers.[4]

At hearings before a special House committee investigating crime in Washington in 1935, Metropolitan Police Capt. Edward J. Kelly declared that his force should absorb both the park and White House police forces to eliminate overlapping duties. (As National Capital Parks superintendent during the 1950s, Kelly would have a different perspective.) Testifying before the House subcommittee on District appropriations in 1937, NPS Director Cammerer again argued at length to keep the Park Police separate.[5]

Later in 1937, the Washington Post reported that a "recent brutal attack upon a young woman in Rock Creek Park" had prompted new demands for consolidation of Washington's two largest police forces. The Post editorialized in favor of the proposal:

> The District can not hope to stamp out the atrocities of perverts in the parks until enforcement of law in those areas becomes the business of all Washington policemen instead of a small, segregated fraction of them.
>
> Overlapping jurisdiction is never conducive to efficiency. Even under present conditions, policemen from the two forces have been known to stand and argue over their respective obligations to arrest a law violator crossing the street into one of Washington's numerous tiny

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[4]"Cammerer Flails Hazen Suggestion To Merge Police," Washington Herald, Nov. 16, 1933, Washingtoniana clipping collection, Martin Luther King Library, Washington, D.C.; "Park Police Will Learn All the Tricks of a Professional Guide in the Near Future," Washington Daily News, Jan. 17, 1934, ibid. Clipping collection hereinafter cited as MLK.

[5]"Police Capt. Kelly Would Absorb Park, White House Forces," Washington Daily News, Mar. 11, 1935, clipping in National Capital Parks scrapbooks, Record Group 79, National Archives; District of Columbia Appropriation Bill for 1938, Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, 75th Congress, 1st Session, on the District of Columbia Appropriation Bill for 1938 (Washington, 1937), p. 747.

parks. The only way to eliminate such conflicts is to make all policemen in the city answerable to one authority.

Congress would doubtless be glad to effect this needed reform if it were recommended by the heads of the two agencies. The Metropolitan police are eager for the change. Since the Park Police are now seeking aid from the Metropolitan force to track down perverts in Rock Creek, they virtually admit their own inadequacy. The urgent necessity of enhancing safety in the parks puts a large responsibility upon the Superintendent of National Capital Parks to sponsor this obviously desirable consolidation.[6]

A 1939 study on the National Capital Parks organization requested by Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes concluded that the protection of park values and visitors was receiving less attention than park traffic. The report advocated divesting traffic duty on the parkways and through-park roads to the Metropolitan Police so that the Park Police could focus on park protection.[7] Secretary Ickes's reaction was not recorded but may be guessed from his habitual resistance to efforts to reduce his sphere of responsibility. Nothing came of the recommendation.

The issue of park safety again rose to a boil in late 1944, following the murder of Dorothy Berrum, a young government worker, at Hains Point. Citing the inadequacy of police protection in the parks, Rep. F. Edward Hébert of Louisiana introduced legislation to abolish the U.S. Park Police and transfer its personnel to the Metropolitan Police. The Progressive Citizens' Association of Georgetown and the Federation of Citizens' Associations endorsed his bill, as did Rep. Joseph O'Hara of Minnesota. "I am frankly worried by the incongruous method of multiple police systems in this city, especially when I think of our growing crime

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[6]"Our Two Police Forces," Oct. 25, 1937, MLK.

[7]H. S. Wagner and Charles G. Sauers, "Study of the Organization of the National Capital Parks," 1939, p. 29. (Copy in History Division, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.)

rate," O'Hara said.[8]

The House District Committee held hearings on Hébert's bill (H.R. 480, 79th Congress) in March 1945. Secretary Ickes had come out against its enactment, and Hébert denounced him for working behind the scenes to postpone its consideration. District Commissioners John R. Young and Guy Mason testified in favor of centralized control over local police activities. But Edward J. Kelly, now superintendent of the Metropolitan Police, was less enthusiastic about acquiring new responsibilities at a time when his force was 369 men short of full strength. The Metropolitan Police were "not looking for more work" and the Park Police were efficient and cooperative, he said. Representative O'Hara was unpersuaded, believing that "while the two police chiefs may work well together now, we have no proof that the cooperation of future chiefs will always be so harmonious."[9]

NPS Associate Director Arthur E. Demaray was the principal witness against Hébert's bill. He supplemented his testimony with a written "Statement of Justification as to the Need of a Separate Protective Force for the National Capital Park System." The statement emphasized the national character of the system--"no mere local municipal function"--and the long history of its separate police force under congressional authority. The Park Police had been highly efficient and successful in curbing vandal-

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[8]"Hebert Bill Asks Park Police Shift to Metropolitan," Washington Daily News, Nov. 22, 1944, clipping in National Capital Parks Policing file 801-03, RG 79, National Archives; "Citizens' Group Backs Police Merger Bill," Evening Star, Feb. 6, 1945, clipping ibid.; "Ickes Accused of Meddling in District," Washington Post, Mar. 13, 1945, clipping ibid.

[9]Memorandum, Acting Director Arthur E. Demaray, NPS, to Secretary of the Interior, Mar. 13, 1945, National Capital Parks Policing file 801-03; Washington Daily News, Mar. 8, 1945, clipping ibid.; Washington Post, Mar. 13, 1945, clipping ibid.

ism, rendering public assistance, and preventing major crimes; the low crime rate in the parks relative to the rest of Washington was cited as evidence. If the forces were merged, the type of officer needed for park work--one good at public relations--would seldom be developed. The statement named 18 other cities with separate park police forces to indicate how widely their purpose was recognized. Consolidation would not save money: the men transferred to the Metropolitan Police would receive the same pay; the same lodges and equipment would continue in use; and part of the force would have to remain to police the National Capital Park system holdings in Maryland and Virginia.[10]

Faced with this opposition, Hébert abandoned his bill but introduced a new one (H.R. 2856) in April. This bill would retain the Park Police but reduce its personnel in the District to the status of watchmen or guards. Their role in felony matters would be limited to that of assisting the Metropolitan Police; they would have primary responsibility only for minor traffic cases and other misdemeanors, plus crowd control. The Park Police would also be funded entirely from federal appropriations, a change from the longstanding arrangement then in effect whereby its personnel in the District (78 of 108 in 1945) were paid and equipped from District appropriations.[11]

Notwithstanding NPS and Interior resistance to this downgrading, both the House and Senate passed H.R. 2856. But President Harry S Truman, acting on recommendations from Interior and the Bureau of the Budget,

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[10]Statement in National Capital Parks Policing file 801-03.

[11]"Would Cut Rank of Park Police," Washington Times-Herald, Mar. 28, 1945, clipping ibid.; H.R. 2656, 79th Congress, Apr. 9, 1945; memorandum, Arthur E. Demaray to Hillory A. Tolson, Apr. 14, 1945, National Capital Parks Policing file 801-03.

vetoed the measure on July 6. His veto message stated that the bill would require the Park Police to serve two masters, the District Commissioners (over the Metropolitan Police) and the Secretary of the Interior, contrary to the Secretary's legal power of exclusive control over the National Capital Parks. He noted that the Metropolitan Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation were already authorized to become involved with felony cases in the parks whenever their services were needed. He also noted that the fiscal 1946 appropriations act for Interior had already been enacted without provision for the men and equipment being funded through the District's budget; if the whole force were shifted to Interior's appropriation, there would be inadequate money to pay for its salaries and equipment.[12]

Having supported Hébert's bill, the Evening Star regretted Truman's veto. "As a practical matter, the burden of investigating felonies in the parks falls on the metropolitan police because the park police are not equipped for this type of work," it editorialized. "The bill would simply have conferred on the former the authority that should accompany responsibility." With respect to the budgetary issue, it discounted the likelihood that Congress would not make a supplementary appropriation to Interior for police salaries. But there was no attempt in Congress to override the veto. Hébert was out of town when it was delivered, and upon his return in September he pronounced the bill dead.[13]

Abolition of the Park Police continued to be discussed for several more years. Rep. J. Glenn Beall of Maryland introduced another bill to

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[12]Congressional Record 91: 7368.

[13]"Police Bill Veto," Evening Star, July 10, 1945, MLK; "Park Police Measure 'Dead,' Hebert Says," Evening Star, Sept. 30, 1945, ibid.

that effect in the next Congress in February 1947, and Rep. Walt Horan of Washington, chairman of the House subcommittee on District appropriations, spoke in favor of consolidating the forces at his hearings on the District's budget for fiscal 1948.[14] The rape and murder of 11-year-old Carol Bardwell in Rock Creek Park in July 1948 moved Rep. George M. Grant of Alabama to sponsor yet another consolidation bill. Declaring that "law enforcement should be under one command," Grant inserted a long Washington Times-Herald editorial titled "Our Deadly Parks" in the Congressional Record. After recounting several recent park assaults and murders, the newspaper offered its view of the situation and prescription for cure:

> Our parks are the haunts of murderers and rapists, sex maniacs and perverts of all varieties, robbers and thieves. Our parks are far more dangerous than the city's streets.
>
> The record being what it is you might think, therefore, that the most powerful and effective of all our police would be concentrated in them. The fact is exactly the opposite, thanks to Harold L. Ickes, ex-Secretary of the Interior.
>
> The fact is that our 30,000 acres of parks in and around Washington are not protected at all by the Metropolitan Police. Our parks are not even in the District of Columbia, lawfully speaking. They are Federal territory claimed by the Department of the Interior, and their regulation and protection are the assignment of some 118 men called park police, who have no plainclothes detectives watching the park crowds. They have only about 50 men on foot to beat the bushes and only two men on horseback for the whole system, whose job is primarily to chase runaways on the bridle path. The others are on motorcycles or in autos mainly for traffic control.
>
> Police cannot watch out for murderers in the shrubbery, when they are in cars hunting speeders. . . .
>
> The solution is obvious. It is, of course, to put the 30,000 acres of Washington parks under the Metropolitan Police, send skilled detectives and foot patrolmen and most important of all, plenty of men on horseback with orders to go up all the little foot paths and back trails.
>
> When this was last attempted, Ickes blocked it. He loved the pomp and circumstance of commanding a traffic force to chase down

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[14] H.R. 2053, 80th Congress, Feb. 19, 1947; District of Columbia Appropriation Bill for 1948, Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, 80th Congress, 1st Session, on the District of Columbia Appropriation Bill for 1948 (Washington, 1947), p. 1322.

people driving faster than Ickes thought they should.

How much murder and rape do we have to take before common sense can override that old fool's vanity?

Washington's parks today are deadly. The metropolitan force, with special horseback squads, are the only police who can begin to make them safe.[15]

Grant's bill went nowhere. Instead, the authority of the Park Police was increased. On the principle that the best defense is a good offense, Arthur Demaray had argued for extending the force's role on federal lands outside Washington at the 1945 hearing on Representative Hébert's bill. Secretary of the Interior Julius A. Krug presented the case for legislation to this effect in 1947:

> Under an interdepartmental agreement with the War Department, [the Park Police] regularly patrol the Suitland Parkway, which is under the jurisdiction of that Department, on a reimbursable basis. Several other agencies of the United States, including the Public Buildings Administration, the Public Roads Administration, and the Civil Aeronautics Administration, having jurisdiction over roads and other Federal reservations in the environs of the National Capital, have requested police supervision of their respective areas by the Park Police on a similar basis.
>
> However, the authority of the United States Park Police to police such reservations adequately and to apprehend offenders on them is not as comprehensive as it should be. . . .[16]

Congress responded with Public Law 80-447 of March 17, 1948, which gave the Park Police general police authority on all lands over which the United States had exclusive or concurrent criminal jurisdiction in Montgomery, Prince George's, and Ann Arundel counties in Maryland and Arlington and Fairfax counties and the city of Alexandria in Virginia. (They could not arrest military personnel on military reservations, however.) This authority was made applicable to all federal lands regardless of the degree

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[15]H.R. 7068, 80th Congress, July 29, 1948; Congressional Record 94: 9528-29.

[16]Letter to Rep. Richard J. Welch, Oct. 7, 1947, in House Report 1299, 80th Congress.

of federal criminal jurisdiction and was extended to Loudoun, Prince William, Stafford, and Charles counties by Public Law 91-383 of August 18, 1970.[17] The expansion of the National Capital Park system outside Washington, beginning with the George Washington Memorial Parkway, laid the groundwork for this extension of authority and proved vital in maintaining the Park Police's independence from the Metropolitan Police.

The Park Police also gained significantly in strength. In January 1949 Assistant Superintendent Frank T. Gartside of National Capital Parks, citing the Carol Bardwell murder, asked the House subcommittee on Interior appropriations for an additional $150,000 to hire 40 more men to increase patrolling in the parks.[18] Congress complied.

Talk of merging the Park Police into the Metropolitan Police or of having the latter assume park law enforcement duties waned after 1950. A 1952 District Government reorganization plan called for a merger, but the D.C. Commissioners dropped that part of their program after conferring with NPS and Budget Bureau officials.[19] As late as 1983 the question of contracting with the Metropolitan Police for park law enforcement was raised in a budget briefing document, only to be dismissed by time-honored arguments: the Park Police were used beyond the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Police, and their expertise in park problems made them irreplaceable. The late Secretary Ickes was quoted in their defense: "The problem of policing the parks is so different from ordinary police work and the duties of park

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[17] U.S. Statutes at Large 62: 81; 84: 827.

[18] Interior Department Appropriation Bill for 1950, Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, 81st Congress, 1st Session (Washington, 1949), p. 365.

[19] John W. Stepp, "D.C. Heads Drop Plan for Reorganization to Take Over Park Police," Evening Star, Apr. 25, 1952, MLK.

policemen are so specialized that it has never proven satisfactory to use city policemen for park duties."[20]

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[20]"Fiscal Year 1984 United States Park Police Budget Briefing Questions," historical file, U.S. Park Police Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

THE FORCE IN TURMOIL

Having attained a critical mass that rendered it relatively secure against outside pressures, the Park Police experienced new and different pressures beginning in the late 1950s. Now its leadership came under attack and its police role was questioned from within the Interior Department. Its professionalism amid the violent demonstrations of the late 1960s and early 1970s was severely tested and sometimes criticized. During much of this period, the park policeman's lot was not a happy one.

In 1957 Donald S. Leonard of Detroit, a former president of the International Association of Police Chiefs and a consultant on police administration, studied the Park Police as part of a five-man team conducting an overall survey of the National Capital Parks organization for Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton. Leonard found a variety of problems weakening the 190-man force, including frequent bypassing and undercutting of authority, poor discipline, low morale, and unsatisfactory promotion policies. All promotions were then in abeyance pending the outcome of a lawsuit by Sgt. John M. Gyakum, who charged that he had been bypassed improperly for promotion to lieutenant.[1]

Leonard recommended several changes: an immediate increase of 51 officers and a total force strength of 407 after ten years; more authority for the chief, who should report to the NCP superintendent rather than an assistant superintendent; establishment of a trial board for officers

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[1]Alfred E. Lewis, "Plans on Discipline, Rank Suggested for Park Police," Washington Post, Nov. 21, 1957, Washingtoniana clipping collection, Martin Luther King Library, Washington, D.C. Clipping collection hereinafter cited as MLK.

charged with offenses, with the chief empowered to suspend; more emphasis on youth in recruiting; training for all recruits before assignment to duty; greater authority and backing for supervisors; promotions restricted to the top three persons on eligibility registers. The recommendations were generally well received. Some of those that could be adopted administratively, like having the chief report directly to the NCP superintendent, were. Legal authority and appropriations were sought for the trial boards and increased strength. The force continued to grow, although at a lesser rate than Leonard proposed.[2]

But problems persisted, rising to unprecedented public visibility in 1961. Before his death that February, NCP Superintendent Harry T. Thompson had asked Peter J. Lejins, a University of Maryland criminologist, to investigate the Park Police. Lejins submitted his 67-page report, based on interviews with members of the force, in April. It portrayed the force as suffering from promotions and assignments based on favoritism, poor discipline, personal intrigues, and outside interference. Lejins found many stories circulating within the organization about corruption, sexual misconduct and drunkenness on duty, a battle between a former chief and a former NCP superintendent in which each sought to get rid of the other, and the need for political support to advance. It was alleged that "in order to survive in the Park Police the officer has to have a Congressman and a lawyer on his staff," and Lejins was shown letters from members of Congress recommending certain men for promotion. All this dirty linen was aired in

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[2]Ibid.; Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1959, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, 85th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1958), p. 424.

a Washington Post story at midyear.[3]

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall and Assistant Secretary John A. Carver, newly arrived with the Kennedy Administration, determined to shake up the organization. Having learned of anonymous letters to the Interior Department on police matters, Carver met publicly with the force in March and advised them against going outside channels with grievances. Unsigned letters to the Secretary would not be read, he warned.[4]

The greatest clamor arose over Secretary Udall's efforts to oust Chief Harold F. Stewart. In charge of the force since 1954, Stewart was perceived in some quarters as "old guard" and resistant to reform. Udall offered his job to Robert J. Mangrum, a black former New York deputy police commissioner, but Mangrum declined, noting that the job paid less than his current position and would require him to uproot his family. Udall's offer was also premature, for as Civil Service Commission Chairman John Macy confirmed, the Park Police chief held a merit position not subject to patronage. Stewart could not be removed except for cause, and he declared that he had no intention of resigning under pressure.[5]

Meanwhile, Assistant Secretary Carver revealed plans to reshape the Park Police along park ranger lines. Their blue police uniforms would give way to green ranger uniforms, and they would devote at least as much attention to interpretation as to law enforcement and traffic control. The

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[3]James R. Carberry and Alfred E. Lewis, "Feuds and Low Morale Found in Park Police," Washington Post, June 25, 1961, MLK.

[4]"Park Police Lectured on Grievances," Evening Star, Mar. 23, 1961, MLK.

[5]William Duke and J. Theodore Crown, "Chief of Park Police Would Fight Ouster," Evening Star, Aug. 6, 1961, MLK; Chuck Stone, "Sure, I Turned Down the Park Police Chief Job," Washington Afro-American, Aug. 5, 1961, MLK.

force would be headed by a ranger with a naturalist's background, and openings would be filled by people of similar experience. "The reaction of a visitor to a green-suited ranger rather than to a man in a blue uniform with a badge would be entirely different," Carver told the Washington Post. As for the recalcitrant Stewart, Carver hinted that he might be reassigned to handle traffic jams in Yellowstone.[6]

The Evening Star denounced Udall's "unauthorized" offer of Stewart's job to Mangrum and viewed the plan to convert the Park Police to a "ranger outfit" headed by a ranger as an improper device for getting rid of the chief. The ability of rangers "to cope with the rapists, child molesters, sex perverts and other criminal types which have operated in local parks" was highly questionable, in its opinion.[7] Undeterred, Interior's leaders proceeded in September to concoct a detail for Stewart more distant by far than Yellowstone: he was assigned to study police requirements on Guam!

The Washington Post, deeming Stewart's exile justified after his unwillingness to retire, editorialized facetiously on "The Advantages of Travel": "Guam was chosen for Chief Stewart's next assignment because, like St. Helena, it is a small island that presumably offers few opportunities for either great deeds or mischief. Behind him, Mr. Stewart will leave a small but expensive police force, largely superfluous in its duties, and corroded for decades by political meddling, vindictive personal feuding, and a tradition of unpunished improprieties." The Post thought the ranger idea a fine one.[8]

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[6]Alfred E. Lewis, "Interior Plans Ranger-Like Park Police," Washington Post, Aug. 11, 1961, MLK.

[7]"Circumventing Civil Service" (editorial), Aug. 13, 1961, MLK.

[8]"The Advantages of Travel," Sept. 21, 1961, MLK.

Carver ordered Nash Castro, a recently appointed NCP assistant superintendent, to act in Stewart's place. When Castro protested his complete lack of police experience, Carver assured him he would learn soon enough. Castro moved from NCP headquarters in the Interior Building to Park Police headquarters, the old Fisheries Laboratory at 7th Street and Independence Avenue occupied by the police since 1952. He found the force in chaos, its morale invisible. To get acquainted and show his interest in their work, he went on patrols with the men. He got them involved in training courses to keep them busy and distract them from dissention. He won their support for discontinuing the solicitation of liquor and food from local merchants as prizes for police pistol matches.[9]

In March 1962, with the approval of Acting NPS Director Hillory A. Tolson, Castro arranged additional exiles for two other veteran Park Police officials he found contributing to factionalism within the force. Lt. Jack B. Hobbs was sent to Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, while Lt. Vincent W. Cleary was detailed to Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis to work out "protective arrangements for buildings and grounds." Hobbs responded tersely to a question about his detail: "Well, let's say I didn't ask for it."[10]

Chief Stewart spent the last three months of 1961 on Guam, returned to Washington at the end of the year, went back to Guam to supervise the implementation of his recommendations for revamping its police force, then came home in April 1962 to write a report about his assignment. NPS Director Conrad L. Wirth told the press that Stewart was being considered

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[9]Telephone interview with Castro, Dec. 9, 1988.

[10]Castro interview; "Park Police Pair Ordered Out of Town," Washington Post, March 15, 1962, MLK.

for another project that "would utilize his vast knowledge of police administration." The project proved to be an expansion of his report; his duty station was his home. This was because of a lack of office space for him and because his wife helped with the typing, the press was told.[11]

Meanwhile, Rep. J. T. Rutherford of Texas, chairman of the House Interior Committee's subcommittee on parks, introduced legislation in Congress to authorize the trial boards and administrative punishments recommended by Donald Leonard five years before. His bill would allow fines and suspensions without pay for more than three days after internal trial board proceedings at which accused officers were entitled to counsel.[12] At a March hearing on his bill, Rutherford said he had "all I am going to take" of pressures to intercede in police disputes and promised legislation to terminate the Park Police if bickering by "knotheads" on the force continued.[13]

Speaking on the House floor before passage of his bill there in April, Rutherford explained it as providing the same means for handling minor disciplinary problems as existed in other police organizations. He continued:

> This bill is 20 years overdue, but I deliberately delayed holding hearings on it in our National Parks Subcommittee until this spring so that it would not be overshadowed by last year's excitement in the local press and elsewhere about the Park Police. Charges of factionalism in this police force, of favoritism and influence, and of low morale have been made many times. They go back many years. . . .
> I cannot say that I am fully satisfied with the U.S. Park Police in spite of apparent improvements since the time my bill was

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[11]"Stewart Due For Another Assignment," Washington Post, Apr. 8, 1962, MLK; Alfred E. Lewis, "Stewart Got $3600 Raise When Ousted," Washington Post, June 10, 1962, MLK.

[12]H.R. 8567, 87th Congress.

[13]John J. Lindsay, "Lawmaker Vows to Ban Park Police Unless Members Learn to Behave," Washington Post, March 10, 1962, MLK.

introduced, but I think if H.R. 8567 is enacted and is justly administered, a good deal of the cause for complaint will disappear. "If this bill and other changes which the Department of the Interior have been making do not substantially lessen internal conflict in the Park Police and improve its standing in the eyes of the citizenry," Rutherford warned again, "I shall move quickly to introduce a bill to abolish the Park Police and transfer its functions to the Metropolitan Police and other organizations."[14]

Rutherford's bill was signed into law that October, a month after the Park Police got a new leader.[15] Feeling that he had done all he could to improve the situation, Nash Castro had requested a permanent replacement so he could return to his civilian duties. Nelson Murdock, a veteran park ranger lately chief of visitor protection for the National Park Service, thereupon became the first deputy chief of the force, assigned to act as chief pending Stewart's retirement and succeed him. In announcing Murdock's appointment, Director Wirth said he had been selected with the idea that the force would function more as a dispenser of information to the public and less as a law enforcement agency.[16]

The Post praised Murdock's selection and anticipated that the shift to ranger uniforms would follow. "His arrival suggests that the Park Police will progressively be devoted to helping visitors enjoy the Capital's park system," it editorialized. "In the past, they have been merely another vest-pocket law enforcement agency, spending most of their time on routine

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[14]Congressional Record 108: 5575.

[15]Public Law 87-797, Oct. 11, 1962, U.S. Statutes at Large 76: 907.

[16]Castro interview; Alfred E. Lewis, "Chief of Ranger Service Will Head Park Police," Washington Post, Aug. 19, 1962, MLK.

patrolling that the District's Metropolitan Police can handle far more efficiently."[17] In contrast, the Star, noting Stewart's support for the trial board reform, deplored the way he was being treated:

> Chief Stewart is not likely to have the pleasure of running the new-styled department. His superiors in Interior have him working on a "preliminary report" on Guam police methods. After that he is expected to prepare a "final" report. He has refused to quit under fire and no one in Interior, in what we think has been a disgraceful performance, has seen fit to prefer charges under Civil Service. If Chief Stewart retires after the Guam report, as seems probable, it will not be he who should be ashamed of the record.[18]

Seeking to make amends at year's end, Wirth publicly called Stewart's completed 495-page report "one of the finest ever produced by the Department." He expected Stewart to retire "within the next month" on disability.[19] In fact, Stewart stayed on until March 31, 1963. The Post described his departure as "an end to the old guard who have run the force for a decade" and saw a "new era" ahead. Interviewed by the Star in May, Chief Murdock saw morale much improved following the retirement of several dissidents elsewhere in the force and actions by Congress to authorize the trial boards, raise pay, and increase the size of the force, easing workloads and opening up promotion opportunities.[20]

Morale was also improved by the quiet shelving of the plan to "rangerize" the force, a very unpopular idea within the organization.[21] If any

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[17]"Asset to the Parks," Aug. 24, 1962, MLK.

[18]"Park Police Trials," Aug. 25, 1962, MLK.

[19]Alfred E. Lewis, "Park Police Chief Completes Report on Guam; Retirement Due in Month," Washington Post, Dec. 31, 1962, MLK.

[20]Alfred E. Lewis, "Park Police on the Verge of New Era," Washington Post, Apr. 1, 1963, MLK; "U.S. Park Police Head Sees Morale Buildup," Evening Star, May 5, 1963, MLK.

[21]Telephone interviews with T. Sutton Jett and James J. Lyons, Nov. 1, 1988.

support for deemphazing law enforcement in the Park Police remained, it was surely dispelled amid the violent demonstrations and increased lawlessness of the late 1960s and 1970s, when instead of policemen becoming more like rangers, rangers had to become more like policeman.

The Poor People's March on Washington in 1968 begot the Resurrection City encampment in West Potomac Park south of the Reflecting Pool, one of the first major demonstrations handled primarily by the Park Police rather than the Metropolitan Police. Attorney General Ramsey Clark and other officials allowed the participants to remain well beyond their alloted time and gave them virtual immunity from criminal arrest as the camp degenerated into a lawless morass, making Resurrection City a notably thankless assignment for the force.[22]

Events of 1970 were particularly stressful, not only in Washington's parks but elsewhere in the national park system. During the Fourth of July weekend an unruly crowd of young people took over part of Yosemite Valley, leading to a violent clash with park rangers unaccustomed to riot control. A Park Police contingent was detailed there soon afterward to help maintain order. In Washington the Fourth of July became a mob scene. An "Honor America Day" program led by Bob Hope and Billy Graham at the Lincoln Memorial was countered by screaming youths around and in the Reflecting Pool who pushed vehicles into the pool and threw rocks and bottles at the mounted park policemen trying to hold them back from the ceremonies. Mob violence, vandalism, and open drug use continued during the evening fireworks display and through the night.

As their horses were cut by thrown broken bottles and in the face of

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[22]Interview with Lynn H. Herring, Feb. 21, 1989.

other extreme provocations, some park policemen overreacted. This prompted some critics to question the professionalism of the force in responding to such episodes. A Washington Post article addressed the issue:

> The Fourth of July weekend clashes triggered a rash of complaints that the park police made indiscriminate arrests, beat demonstrators, fired tear gas promiscuously, used abusive language, gave arbitrary orders and were generally rough and discourteous. . . .
>
> The July 4 incidents also led many civilian observers on the scene--lawyers, city officials, human relations workers--to argue that the 360-man park police force generally does not stand up under today's problems of crowd provocation and abuse as well as does its city counterpart, the D.C. metropolitan police.[23]

Grant Wright, chief during the difficult period from 1968 to 1973, was quoted as disagreeing with this assessment. But the article portrayed Metropolitan Police Chief Jerry Wilson as more often in personal command on the scene than Wright, who was inclined to delegate control to Deputy Chief Alfred Beye, an old-school cop overtly hostile to demonstrators.[24]

The 1970 disorders prompted a $550,000 supplemental appropriation to the National Park Service for law enforcement in fiscal 1971. (Coincidentally, that was the year in which partial funding of the Park Police by District of Columbia appropriations was discontinued, removing one of the old rationales for having the District absorb the force.) The money was needed: violence again disrupted Washington as May Day demonstrators tried to shut down the government, and lawless elements became a growing threat in other national parklands.

Law enforcement was a major topic of discussion at the Park Service's budget hearings before its House appropriations subcommittee in April 1971. NPS Director George B. Hartzog, Jr., testified that the Service had

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[23]Paul W. Valentine, "Protest Incidents Raise Questions About Park Police," Sept. 21, 1970, MLK.

[24]Ibid.

considered forming a national park police organization but decided against doing so on the recommendation of the International Association of Police Chiefs. Instead, they had established in their Washington Office a Law Enforcement Division headed by Park Police Inspector Franklin A. Arthur and were assigning a Park Police captain to each NPS regional office to coordinate law enforcement in the parks. "We will also detail an officer to the 15 or 20 parks in which we have been having major law enforcement problems over the last few years," he announced, mentioning Grand Canyon, Grand Teton, Great Smoky Mountains, Lassen Volcanic, Mount Rainier, Olympic, Yellowstone, and Yosemite national parks; Cape Cod, Fire Island, and Point Reyes national seashores; Blue Ridge and Natchez Trace parkways; Badlands National Monument; Lake Mead National Recreation Area; and Ozark National Scenic Riverways. A strike force of 125 privates under an officer would be maintained in the National Capital Parks, available to reach trouble spots anywhere in the park system on 12 hours' notice. The strike force had already been sent to Death Valley National Monument when trouble threatened there that Easter weekend.[25]

During 1972 park policemen were assigned at various times to Big Bend, Grand Canyon, Rocky Mountain, and Yosemite national parks; Delaware Water Gap and Lake Mead national recreation areas; Cape Cod and Padre Island national seashores; Blue Ridge and Natchez Trace parkways; and Statue of Liberty National Monument.[26] These details in the early 1970s foreshadowed a significant expansion of the force beyond the national capital area and

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[25]Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1972, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, 92nd Congress, 1st Session (Washington, 1971), pp. 667-68.

[26]U.S. Park Police Annual Report, 1972.

coincided with noteworthy improvements in its training, equipment, and overall capabilities. The maturing of the United States Park Police to become one of the nation's elite law enforcement units will be recounted in the concluding chapter.

THE FORCE MATURES

Just as the standing of the military usually increases in wartime, so did the stature of the nation's police rise in reaction to the domestic upheavals of the late 1960s and early 1970s. When "law and order"--disdained for a time in some circles as a code for repression--became a precious commodity, those charged with maintaining it were given more of the resources necessary to do so. Increased personnel, training, equipment, and public support tended to translate into higher morale, better performance, and greater capacity to meet the challenges of crime and disorder that rended American society during the Vietnam era.

No organization exemplified this trend better than the Park Police. The force expanded from 417 officers in 1971 to 570 officers in 1977, with a proportionate increase in support personnel. Jerry L. Wells, who succeeded Grant Wright as chief in 1973 and served capably until 1979, commanded a complex organization, which was outlined in a published report on the status of the force in 1975.[1]

The heart of the force was the Operations Division, led by Deputy Chief Parker T. Hill. It then consisted of approximately 410 uniformed officers, 32 plainclothes officers, 54 guards, 18 civilians, and seven visitor and traffic aides. They were divided among five branches: Patrol, Criminal Investigations, Special Operations, the New York Field Office, and the San Francisco Field Office.

The Patrol Branch, under Inspector Denny R. Sorah, employed 232 offi-

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[1]The United States Park Police: 1975 (Washington, 1976).

cers, 43 guards, seven aides, and six civilians in five substations in and around Washington. The Central Substation, commanded by Lt. Richard J. Cusick, was by far the largest with 99 officers and was responsible for patrolling the capital's monumental core. The Baltimore-Washington Parkway Substation, located in Greenbelt Park, Maryland, dated from the assignment of 11 men to police that road in 1953. (The National Park Service accepted jurisdiction over the parkway with reluctance and sought for years to transfer it to Maryland.) Thirty officers under Lt. Lloyd E. Hill patrolled this major north-south artery and adjacent federal properties in 1975.

The Anacostia Subtation, opened in 1970, had 36 officers under Lt. Thomas J. McDonnell responsible for Anacostia Park, the Suitland Parkway, Fort Washington Park, and other parklands in eastern Washington and nearby Maryland. Although the parks they served were old Park Police responsibilities, the current Rock Creek Park and George Washington Memorial Parkway substations opened in 1971. Lt. Richard E. Magee commanded the 29 officers assigned to the Rock Creek Park Substation, with jurisdiction over numerous park areas in Northeast and Northwest Washington in addition to Rock Creek Park. Lt. W. Franklin Stevens had 39 officers under him at the George Washington Memorial Parkway Substation, located at Glen Echo Park, Maryland. They covered the parkway on both sides of the river, Wolf Trap Farm Park, Arlington National Cemetery, and the Cheasapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park as far as Seneca, Maryland.

The Criminal Investigations Branch, under Inspector Roy E. Coign, included 31 investigators and seven uniformed officers in the Identification Section. Branch personnel searched for and collected evidence in some 2,500 criminal cases during 1975. Photography and fingerprinting were part of their responsibilities. With other elements of the force, they regularly

assisted the U.S. Secret Service in providing security for the president, vice president, and visiting heads of state.[2]

The Special Operations Force, commanded by Inspector James C. Lindsey, comprised 97 officers employing motorcycles, horses, helicopters, dogs, and other means of dealing with specialized situations. The Horse Mounted Unit dated from the mid-1930s. After the war John D. Rockefeller, Jr., donated Morgan horses from his estate at Pocantico Hills, New York, and by 1953 the unit encompassed 10 mounted police, used primarily in Rock Creek Park.[3] In 1975 the Horse Mounted Unit had 35 officers under Lt. Robert O. Harrison. In addition to regular patrols, they were called upon for demonstrations, parades, exhibitions, and special events at Minute Man National Historical Park near Boston and Fort McHenry National Monument in Baltimore. Sgt. Denis R. Ayres was honored for his many contributions to the mounted program ten years later with the Department of the Interior's Distinguished Service Award and the special rank of sergeant major.

In 1950 a Civilian Disturbance Group equipped with helmets, shotguns, and tear gas equipment had been formed for riot control, and a 30-foot trailer had been outfitted as a mobile field headquarters after a mid-air crash at National Airport showed the force ill-equipped to respond to protracted emergencies.[4] From such modest beginnings rose the sophisticated

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[2]Public Laws 90-331 of June 6, 1968, and 94-524 of October 17, 1976, enable the Secret Service to require assistance from federal departments and agencies in performing its protective duties.

[3]"Park Police Acquire 3 Rockefeller Horses of Noted Morgan Line," Evening Star, Apr. 22, 1946, Washingtoniana Clipping Collection, Martin Luther King Library, Washington, D.C. (hereinafter cited as MLK); Interior Department Appropriations for 1954, Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, 83rd Congress, 1st Session (Washington, 1953), p. 226.

[4]"20-Man Park Police Riot Squad Stands Inspection at Monument," Evening

special equipment and tactics teams and Selective Enforcement Unit of the Special Operations Force. When the "People's Bicentennial Commission" massed 100,000 protesters to disrupt President Gerald R. Ford's appearance at Minute Man National Historical Park on April 19, 1975, the Selective Enforcement Unit helped provide security. Other notable demonstrations at which Special Operations units functioned during the decade included those by Iranians in 1978 and Arab students protesting the treaty between Israel and Egypt in 1979, both in Lafayette Park, and the American Agricultural Movement's month-long occupation of the Mall in 1979. Of course, major demonstrations entailed commitments from all elements of the force.

When the Canine Unit was established in 1957, the Park Police became the first police department in the Washington area to use service dogs. During 1975 the unit provided explosives detection assistance at Washington National Airport and the Smithsonian Institution and aided the Bermuda Police in connection with Queen Elizabeth II's visit to Bermuda. The unit also participated in more than 50 school and community exhibitions.

The Aviation Section was formed in April 1973 under the command of Lt. Richard T. Chittick to provide aerial observation, photography, and rescue services throughout the metropolitan area. Initially it consisted of one Bell 206B Jet Ranger helicopter, "Eagle One," costing $175,000 and manned by three pilots and three rescue technicians--all Park Police officers. In 1975 a second 206B, "Eagle Two," was added at a cost of $225,000, requiring three more pilots. At that time the section moved from its original base at the Anacostia Naval Station to Andrews Air Force Base while awaiting the completion of its permanent facility, "Eagles Nest," at Anacostia Park in

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Star, Sept. 30, 1950, MLK; "Park Police Add New Emergency HQ . . . A Trailer," Washington Post, July 19, 1950, MLK.

May 1976.

During 1975 the section recorded more than 1,100 hours of flight time. Its missions included 14 river rescues, 17 searches for felons, and 28 air evacuations from traffic accidents. In 1979 two additional crews allowed the section to expand its service from 16 to 24 hours, and Eagle One was replaced by a Bell 206L-1 Long Ranger helicopter with a larger engine and stretched fuselage costing $460,000. The rescue technicians were upgraded to intermediate paramedics by the Washington Hospital Center's MEDSTAR facility in 1982, and in 1983 Eagle Two was replaced by a Bell 206L-3 Long Ranger with a still-larger engine costing $700,000.[5]

The section's most publicized mission came during a snowstorm on the afternoon of January 13, 1982, when Air Florida Flight 90 struck one of the 14th Street bridges after its takeoff from National Airport and plunged into the Potomac. At considerable personal risk, pilot Donald W. Usher and paramedic Melvin E. Windsor hovered low over the river in Eagle One and pulled five survivors to safety. The pair received the Interior Department's Valor Award from Secretary of the Interior James G. Watt in a special ceremony soon afterward.

In 1972 Congress gave the National Park Service two more major urban responsibilities: Gateway National Recreation Area in New York City and Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco. In February 1974 they became what are still the only national park system units outside the Service's National Capital Region with permanent Park Police contingents.[6]

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[5]"History of the United States Park Police Aviation Section," historical file, U.S. Park Police Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

[6]One Park Police sergeant has also been assigned to Lake Mead National

Inspector Hugh Groves was the first commander of the New York Field Office at Gateway, followed in 1975 by Inspector James P. Deely. Forty-five officers and 10 guards were assigned there in 1975. The office began the first Park Police boat patrol, which in 1977 had four boats (a Mako, a Boston Whaler, and two Grovers) and handled more than 800 incidents ranging from rescues to larcenies. The office also added four horse mounted patrol officers in 1977.[7]

The San Francisco Field Office, under Inspector Lynn H. Herring, expanded from 29 officers in 1975 to 44 in 1977, including five horse mounted officers. In addition to its regular duties at Golden Gate, the unit was positioned to respond to special law enforcement needs at other national parklands in the West. In 1975, for example, it augmented Special Operations Force personnel from Washington in handling demonstrations at Death Valley National Monument and Mount Rushmore National Memorial.

More highly educated recruits and more intensive training after recruitment contributed heavily to the greater professionalism of the Park Police during the 1970s and 80s. In 1972 training for all federal law enforcement personnel (except FBI agents and military police) was consolidated at the Treasury Department's Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, located originally on L Street in Washington and relocated to the former Glynco Naval Station at Brunswick, Georgia, in 1975. FLETC provided a 12-week basic training program covering such topics as due process in

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Recreation Area since 1972. He supervises the law enforcement rangers there--the only place with such an arrangement. (Lake Mead's proximity to Las Vegas, Nevada, poses special demands on its rangers.)

[7]The United States Park Police: 1977 (Washington, 1978), pp. 13, 17.

interrogation, scientific aids to investigation, ethics, self-defense, and skilled vehicle operation. Much of the curriculum came from the former Park Police training program at Jones Point in Alexandria, Virginia. Park Police graduates then advanced to five weeks of specialized training emphasizing local and park laws and regulations. Ultimately they became partners of field training officers for nine weeks of on-the-job training. Capt. Charles R. Stebbins, head of the force's Training Branch in 1975, was stationed at FLETC to coordinate Park Police training and instruction there.

Some park rangers had attended the Park Police training program at Jones Point, and many more were sent to FLETC. Although the need for greater law enforcement capability was clear in many parks, the conversion of generalist rangers to parapolicemen became controversial. Some thought the trend to law enforcement specialization went too far and deplored what they saw as an erosion of the traditional ranger image. "I firmly believe that in some parks the law enforcement speciality has gotten out of balance with other reponsibilities of park rangers," NPS Director Gary Everhardt declared in 1976, even as legislation was en route to enactment that would require all park employees exercising law enforcement duties to be specially trained and certified.[8] Others felt that rangers who had only been through FLETC and did not constantly do police work were unlikely to be sufficiently trained and mentally prepared to handle difficult police situations.[9] The law enforcement training of rangers also tended to revive the old question

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[8]Memorandum, "Law Enforcement in the National Park Service," Aug. 13, 1976, USPP historical file; Public Law 94-458, Oct. 7, 1976, U.S. Statutes at Large 90: 1939.

[9]Interview with Lt. Michael Fogarty, Feb. 19, 1988.

about the need for a separate park police force. Anticipating this question from Congress, a 1983 budget briefing paper stated that rangers were still generalists insufficiently skilled in urban law enforcement to deal with situations handled by the Park Police.[10]

The force of the 70s and 80s was not only better educated and trained but more representative of the society it served. Blacks were a rarity in the Park Police in 1947 when Grant Wright came aboard. By 1949 12 of its 114 officers were black, but Wright and three black colleagues had to pursue a grievance to gain cruiser patrol assignments and be considered for promotion. A year later Wright became a motorcycle officer, and in 1954 he was made the first black corporal.[11] Rising through the ranks to progressively more responsible positions, Wright became chief of the force in 1968. Other blacks followed to high rank, among them Parker T. Hill, who succeeded Jerry Wells as chief in 1979 and led the force until Lynn Herring took over in 1981.

The first park policewoman was Beatrice Ball, who joined the force on January 1, 1942, after 10 years with the Metropolitan Police. She soon enlisted in the Navy's WAVES, however, and was replaced by Lydia H. Barton that summer. The novelty of Barton's appointment was played up in a January 1943 press account: "Fifteen stalwart members of the Park Police were startled yesterday by the appearance of Mrs. Lydia H. Barton, park policewoman, at the first session of the Park Police Training School" (founded three years earlier). Both women were restricted to cases involving

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[10]"Fiscal Year 1984 United States Park Police Budget Briefing Questions," USPP historical file.

[11]"Park Police Unit Being Integrated," Washington Pittsburgh Courier, Sept. 10, 1949, MLK; "First Corporal Is Named by D.C. Park Police," Washington Afro-American, Nov. 20, 1954, MLK.

women and juveniles.[12]

In 1954 there were five women on the force. One was Pvt. Grace H. Judy, a 10-year veteran with a college degree who had formerly taught high school. Among her duties, as featured in a newspaper article, were plain-clothes assignments at the scenes of molestation complaints carrying a revolver, blackjack, and claw in her handbag.[13]

By the mid-70s women as well as blacks were in the Park Police mainstream. Chief Wells ordered aggressive affirmative action in recruiting, and the minority and female composition of FLETC classes ran as high as 40 percent.[14] In 1974 Kathleen Carlson achieved the highest scholastic score--971 points out of a possible 1,000--of any basic trainee at FLETC to that time.

Jane P. Marshall was typical of the modern policewomen who performed the same duties as their male counterparts. On May 21, 1975, she came to the aid of Officer Ronald L. Blankenship, who had been shot. Jumping from her cruiser, she was struck by two bullets. While bleeding profusely she transmitted a call for help, reported the means of the assailant's escape, and assisted in directing the landing of the force's medivac helicopter. (The assailant and his accomplice were later apprehended, convicted, and imprisoned.) Officer Marshall's courage and cool performance under fire was in the best police tradition.[15]

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[12]"Ace of D.C. Policewomen Soon Will Join Park Force," Evening Star, Dec. 1, 1941, MLK; "Park Police Training School Gets First Woman 'Student,'" Washington Times-Herald, Jan. 6, 1943, MLK.

[13]"She Always Gets Her Man," Evening Star, Aug. 22, 1954, MLK.

[14]Telephone interview with William McDonnell, Mar. 1, 1989.

[15]The United States Park Police: 1975, p. 32.

The attack on Blankenship and Marshall brought the force almost as much publicity as an incident involving quite a different woman the previous year. At 2 a.m. on October 7, 1974, Pvts. Thomas R. Johann and Larry W. Brent observed a Lincoln Continental speeding through West Potomac Park without lights and halted it at the Kutz Bridge over the Tidal Basin. Its intoxicated occupants included Rep. Wilbur Mills of Arkansas, the powerful chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, and Annabell Battistella, an Argentinian go-go dancer who had performed at the Silver Slipper nightclub on 13th Street as Fanne Foxe, "the Argentine firecracker." While Mills threatened Johann's job, Battistella ran from the car and jumped into the water, from which she was pulled struggling by Brent.[16] The comic-opera episode and ensuing scandal inspired "The Ballad of Fanne Foxe" ("She was only a stripper at the Silver Slipper, but she had her ways and means . . .") and doomed Mills's congressional career.

With its base of operations in the nation's capital, the U.S. Park Police would inevitably become involved in such highly visible and sensitive situations. Fortunately, by this time the force had risen far above its original status and overcome the internal turmoil that had earlier hampered its effectiveness. No longer dismissed as second-rate, its survival assured, it commanded near-universal respect as a credit to the police profession and the National Park Service.

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[16]Lance Gay, "Facts Close In on Absent Mills," Washington Star-News, Oct. 10, 1974, MLK.

APPENDIX

CHIEFS UNDER THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Patrick J. Carroll	1932-1940
Henry Helms	1940-1941
Mark A. Raspberry (in military 1942-1945)	1941-1954
Jerome B. Lawler (vice Raspberry)	1942-1945
Harold F. Stewart	1954-1963*
Nelson Murdock	1963-1966
Walter W. Lange	1966-1968
Grant Wright	1968-1973
Jerry L. Wells	1973-1979
Parker T. Hill	1979-1981
Lynn H. Herring	1981-

*Nash Castro acted as chief 1961-62 and Nelson Murdock acted as chief 1962-63; see pages 42-45.

UNIFORM OF
·U·S·PARK WATCHMEN·
Public Buildings and Grounds.
WASHINGTON·D·C·

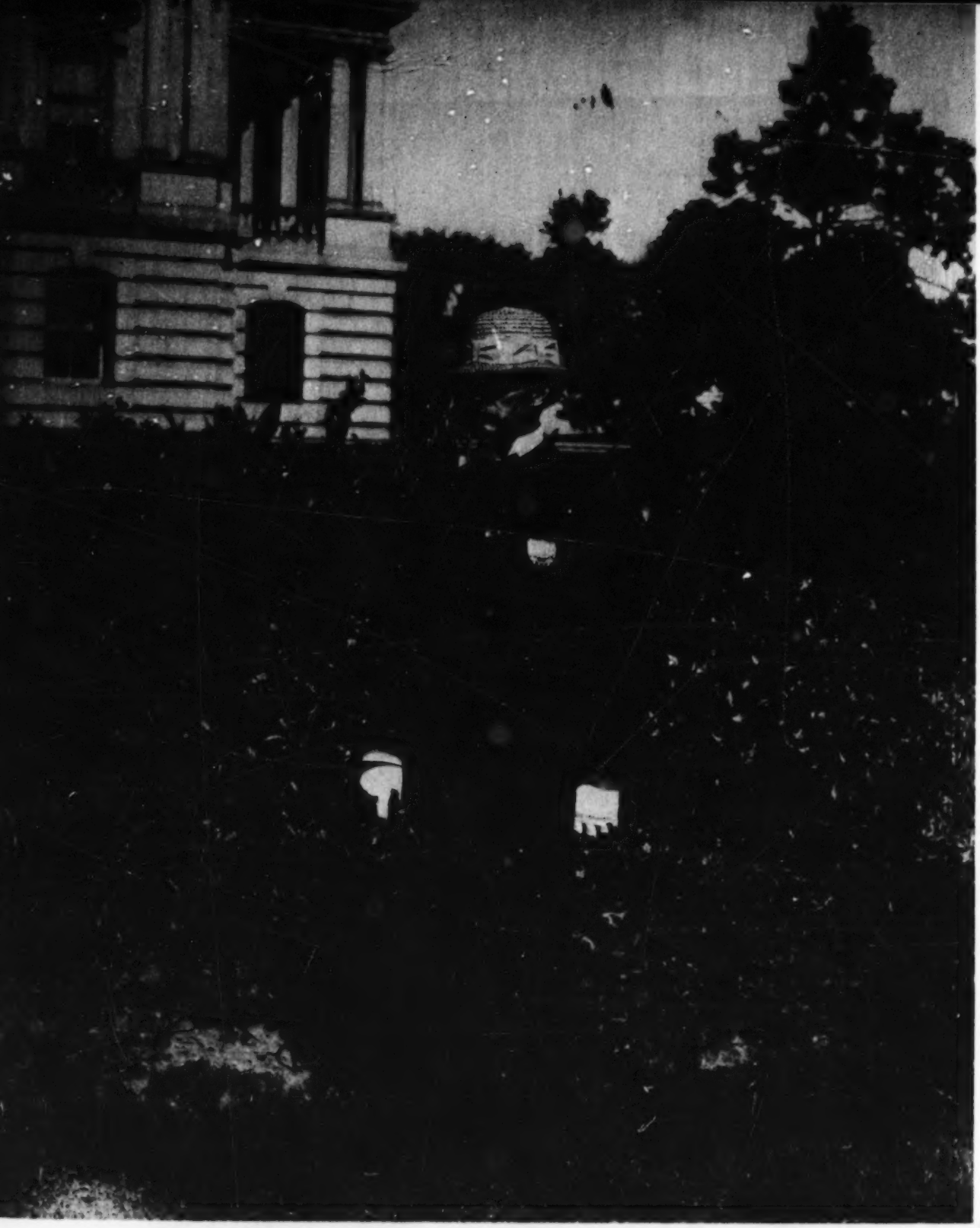
Adopted June. 30th 1900.

Color.
Park Green.

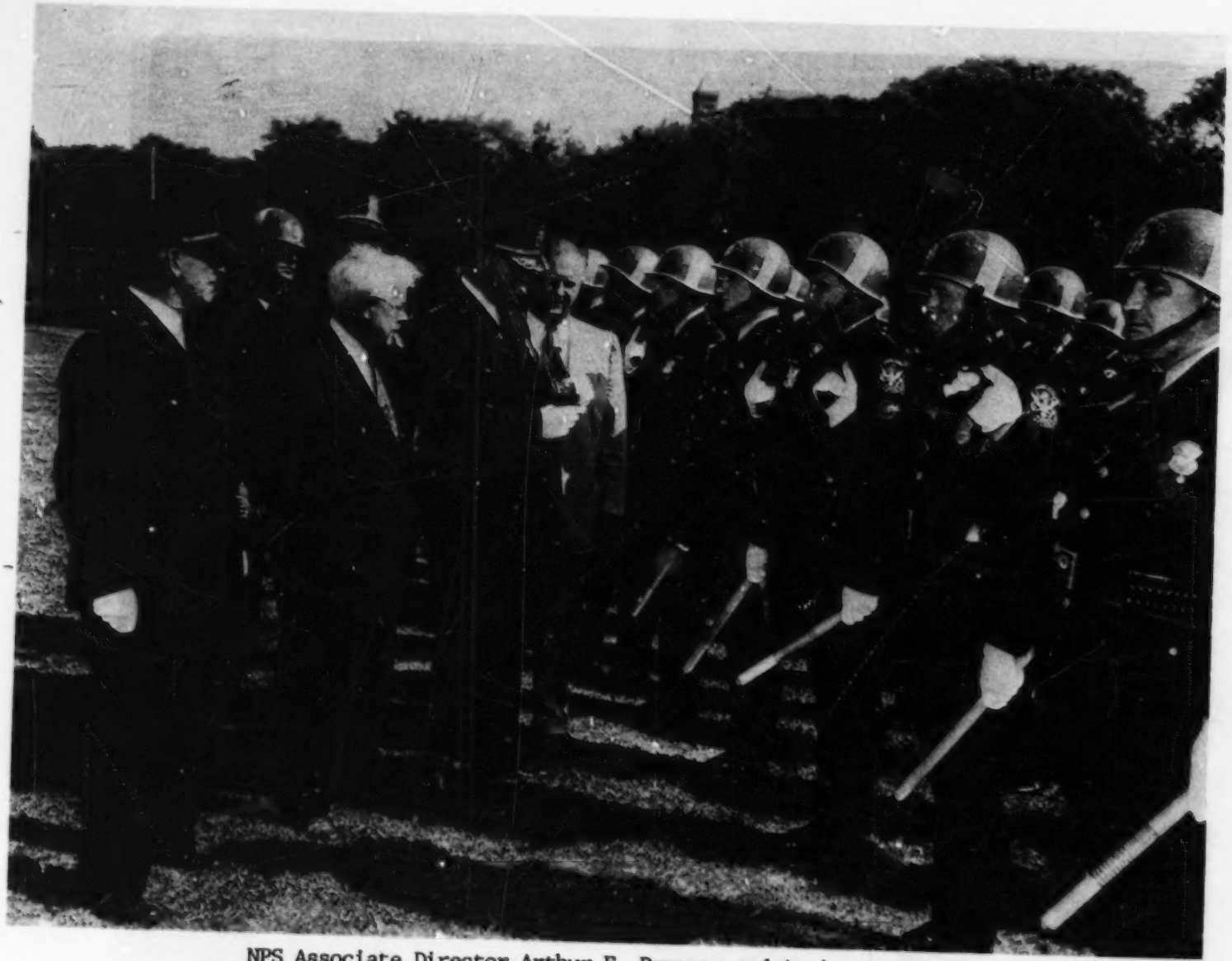
Eng 56 2

The First Park Watchmen's Uniform, 1900
(From Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1900, p. 5244)

The Second Uniform, 1903
(National Archives)



The Second Uniform with Summer Straw Helmet
(National Archives)



NPS Associate Director Arthur E. Demaray and Assistant Director Conrad L. Wirth flank USPP Chief Mark A. Raspberry inspecting Civilian Disturbance Group on Washington Monument Grounds, 1950 (photo by Abbie Rowe, NPS).

USPP Horse Mounted Unit takes top honors in police team competition at Devon, Pennsylvania, 1973. Chief Jerry L. Wells, left foreground, receives trophy from Sgt. Denis R. Ayres. Mounted from left: Pvts. Harry Huber, Norbert Bonjo, David Lennox, Reubin Ginn, John Thrift. (NPS Newsletter photo)

William Butler, Director, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, and Deputy Chief Franklin A. Arthur congratulate Pvt. Kathleen Carlson for top scholastic honors at FLETC, 1974 (photo by Herman E. Baines, USPP).

A NOTE ON SOURCES

In a compact history, little purpose is served by repeating in a bibliography all the specific sources identified in the footnotes. Instead, this note will highlight the general collections and sources that proved most useful during the research.

The U.S. Statutes at Large, the chronological publication of all federal laws, was a basic reference especially important in tracing early appropriations for park watchman. Nineteenth-century appropriations acts itemized expenditures for personnel in great detail; from their failure to mention watchmen on Washington's public grounds beyond the White House and Capitol before 1866, it could reasonably be inferred that there were none. The reports of the Commissioner of Public Buildings, who had jurisdiction over the parks until 1867, were likewise silent on park watchmen until 1866, corroborating the inference.

Record Group 42 in the National Archives contains the records of the office of Public Buildings and Grounds, which oversaw the parks for the Army's Chief of Engineers from 1867 to 1925, and the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, its independent successor from 1925 to 1933. Here are found the annual reports of the military officers in charge of these offices and much correspondence pertaining to the watchmen and police. Unfortunately, Record Group 79, the records of the National Park Service in the Archives, contains only sporadic reference to the Park Police after 1933.

The volumes of annual congressional hearings on the District of Columbia and Interior Department appropriations bills since 1933 contain some

testimony and supporting information on the Park Police, as does the Congressional Record in its coverage of other bills and floor debate related to the force.

Clipping collections in the Washingtoniana Room of the Martin Luther King Library helped to compensate for the paucity of Park Service records covering the years after 1933. The clippings, from the several Washington newspapers since the 1930s, are naturally weighted to the more sensational aspects of Park Police history rather than routine operations; the chapters that depend heavily on them, "Defending the Force" and "The Force in Turmoil," should be read accordingly.

Most of the annual reports issued by the Park Police in recent decades have been statistical compilations of limited value for a narrative history. The reports published for 1975 and 1977 were exceptions, providing good descriptions of the force's activities in those years. A historical file kept in the Office of Planning and Development at Park Police Headquarters contains much useful information and a few short papers tracing the backgrounds of various functions, such as the three-page "History of the United States Park Police Aviation Section." Conversations with T. Sutton Jett, Nash Castro, James J. Lyons, Michael Fogarty, Lynn Herring, and William McDonnell provided valuable leads and helped fill gaps in the written record.

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